



# Chambers's Journal

## SIXTH SERIES.

### EMIGRATION 'ON SPEC.'

**R**OLLING stones gather no moss; nevertheless the constant repetition of this proverb will in no way prevent adventurous spirits from trying their fortune abroad, and not always unsuccessfully.

Many people are apt to imagine that emigration is the only remedy for their decayed fortunes, and they point to the many cases of returned acquaintances who have 'made their pile' in countries where money is presumedly more easily earned. Alas! they forget that the unsuccessful emigrants, who are probably more numerous—certainly so, if we confine ourselves to those who emigrate 'on spec'—do not return to make a parade of their ill-luck, but rather do all in their power to conceal it.

This article refers chiefly to those who emigrate purely on speculation; and these may be divided into two classes: those who work with their hands and those who do not. The former are frequently successful, the latter very seldom so; for it must be remembered that we do not include the emigrant with large capital, the word 'emigrant' generally conveying the impression that the wanderer is blessed with little or none of this world's goods.

We will commence with the latter class, who are only too numerous. Let us suppose that a young man belonging to the middle classes, and who has never done any hard work in his life, is suddenly landed on the shores of some distant colony. He probably has some letters of recommendation to local residents, and he has a vague idea that these will be instrumental in procuring him a situation of some kind. The friends to whom he is introduced may make every effort to assist him, but they find it impossible to obtain for him such employment as he requires. Were he a working-man it would be different; for such there is generally an opening of some kind in the colonies. But the ranks of clerks, shopmen, and other 'white-hand gentry' are terribly overcrowded; even local residents with much personal

influence have great difficulty in finding light employment of any kind for their sons. How, then, can the stranger expect to obtain it? The writer has personal knowledge of the efforts of the late Sir Harry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, to obtain a situation of some kind for a youth recommended to him; but, in spite of his great influence and his best endeavours, he was unable to procure suitable employment for the applicant.

Clerks and shopmen are apt to attach too great importance to references or testimonials from English houses with whom they have been employed; but on landing in a colony they soon find that such testimonials are almost useless, and that a fourth-rate local reference is better than a first-class one to parties who may be thousands of miles away; in fact, prospective employers always look on the latter with suspicion.

The educated emigrant without capital may find himself in a very unenviable position as soon as his funds are exhausted, which in the majority of cases is very soon after his arrival. His only resource then is to seek for any kind of menial labour for which he may be adapted; and here he enters into competition with men of a class with whom he would be ashamed to associate at home, but who are vastly his superiors in the field of labour in which he is now forced to seek employment. We have seen in the colonies university graduates acting as lumpers or dock labourers on the Australian wharves, and others as butchers on sheep-stations. There are many who, through some inherent or acquired vice, or even through no fault of their own, sink much lower; and over the subsequent career of these it is best to draw a veil.

The educated emigrant is always looked on with suspicion in the colonies. The general impression is that he is a ne'er-do-well shipped off by friends who are glad to get him out of their way, and in the great majority of cases this is doubtless very near the truth.

To the emigrant who seeks employment in manual labour—and nearly all are forced to do

so—we would say, Do not wait in the seaport towns until all your money is exhausted. Leave your heavy luggage behind you, and push out, lightly equipped, into the interior, where there is nearly always a demand for labour, even when the large centres are crowded with unemployed. When an opening has once been made the rest is generally easy. Do not be ashamed of menial employment. Such is generally well paid in the colonies, and the prudent man may save enough in a few years to set up in some business or industrial enterprise. For small industries there are frequent openings and a good future.

We remember a typical instance which may show the kind of stuff that is required in the colonist, if he belongs to the educated proletariat class. A doctor of our acquaintance went out to Australia in the same ship with the writer. He gave his services on the voyage in return for his passage, and landed in the colony with very little hard cash in his pocket. Not many days after his arrival we were surprised to see him hard at work in a trench which had been dug in the street for the purpose of repairing mains. 'Hullo, doctor,' we cried, 'do you find this more profitable than drawing teeth?' 'Oh,' he replied cheerily, 'I am going in for that later; I am only raising capital now.' And, in fact, two or three years later we had the satisfaction of seeing him installed, with brass plate on his door, out of the capital he had raised as a navy. Such ups and downs are frequent in the colonies.

There are times when the working-man is very much in demand abroad and in the colonies. We remember when walking through the streets of Chicago in the year 1883 we were frequently accosted by employment touts, who hastened to offer us work at wages ranging from one dollar fifty cents to one dollar seventy-five cents a day. It is the only occasion where we remember to have seen labour in such demand, for it must be remembered that our attire was by no means that of a working-man, which makes the fact more remarkable. Alas! things have changed very much in Chicago since then; let no one, therefore, hurry off to that city of pork and wheat in the hope that certain employment is awaiting him. The United States is rapidly filling up, though in some of the western States the working-man is still in demand at good wages.

There are many of those engaged in light employment who find extreme difficulty in obtaining an engagement after they have reached the age of forty. They are too old, they are told; younger men are wanted. It is a great pity it should be so, but it is a fact. Many of these, in despair of obtaining employment at home, take refuge in emigration. If physically robust and capable of hard work, they may better their

position, for it must be remembered that in a new country as a general rule muscle is worth more than brains. The brainy man should stay at home; if clever, he has more chance of making a fortune in England than in Australia. But do not let the clerk, especially if turned forty, who has never wielded any tool heavier than a pen, imagine that he is capable of hard manual labour; it is only in exceptional cases that this is so.

In the United States and the British colonies the emigrant will find the conditions of life not greatly different from what he has been accustomed to at home. But there are not a few emigrants, speculative and otherwise, who turn their attention to foreign countries, especially the River Plate. Here circumstances are widely different; the habits of the people, the language, and the entire surroundings are strange. The Englishman unacquainted with the language will naturally find himself at a disadvantage, yet there are many such who emigrate thither; from a personal knowledge of the country, however, we consider their ultimate prospects of success much less than in our colonies, although Argentina is an excellent field for those who obtain situations under contract previous to emigration. The best positions in the railways and other large companies in South America are filled from England, where these companies generally have their head offices; and although the speculative emigrant can sometimes find employment on the railways, which nearly all belong to English companies, it is generally of an inferior grade.

With reference to the woman emigrant: the domestic servant or the woman who understands dairy work can nearly always find employment and good wages in newer countries. But what of the educated gentlewomen, of whom there are not a few in the colonies? The latter generally seek employment as governesses, a calling terribly overstocked and underpaid; while many of them are forced to enter domestic service, in which they can earn good wages, are better treated, and have also more privileges than servants in England, but have to associate with coarse and uneducated women, which makes the position altogether an unpleasant one. Their only hope, therefore, is in marriage, by which they not infrequently better their position. In some districts, indeed, such as the Transvaal, the more newly settled parts of Canada, and certain of the western States, there may be said to be a dearth of women, and their prospects in the marriage or labour market are correspondingly increased.

In conclusion, we would sum up our advice to the educated or 'white-handed' man who wishes to emigrate in one word—'Don't.' These remarks do not, of course, apply to the fortunate few who have secured employment previous to emigrating.



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## OF ROYAL BLOOD.

## A TALE OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

## CHAPTER III.—THE SHADOW.



EXT morning I determined to learn something further regarding the mystery of Gordon's wife, and to either confirm or dispel my apprehensiveness. I devised an excuse, and, going down to the Foreign Office, found Gordon in his room, poring over some long, formal document which he instinctively covered with his blotting-pad as the messenger ushered me in.

His greeting was cordial as usual, and presently, when we had chatted a little time, he asked suddenly:

'Well, Phil, and how do you like Judith?

'She's altogether charming,' I answered. 'By Jove! old chap, I envy you. A *ménage* like yours is a distinct improvement on the Albany, even though our Saturday evening concerts, with little chorus-girls as performers, were pleasant gatherings—weren't they?'

'They were,' he laughed. 'Good heavens! what a life we led in those days! But after you went, and I was alone, I fancy I must have settled down a bit.'

'You have indeed settled down,' I said; 'for you have a wife to be proud of. She came from the Midlands somewhere, if I remember the announcement in the papers?'

'Yes. From a little place called Rockingham.'

'She surely wasn't a village belle? She's far too refined for that.'

'Hardly, old fellow. She was born in London, but she lived a good deal on the Continent, and afterwards with an aunt down at Rockingham for several years.'

'And how did you come to know her?' I inquired, trying to conceal my anxiety and inquisitiveness.

'I was staying with some people at Ketton, in the vicinity, and we were introduced at a local flower-show held in the Castle grounds.'

'And you fell in love with her?'

He nodded.

'Well,' I said, 'I don't wonder that you did. I'm sure I wish you both every happiness. Has she any brothers?'

'No,' he answered. 'She was left an orphan at ten, and her aunt, quite a cosmopolitan old lady, has ever since looked after her. Her father was a wealthy man, and when she came of age, three years before I married her, she inherited a very respectable fortune.'

'Oh!' I exclaimed, surprised. 'Then she had money?'

'Of course, my dear fellow. You don't think that I could build and furnish a house like Holmwood on my salary? Heaven knows we

who work at home get a paltry pittance enough. If the Government doubled our remuneration it wouldn't be adequate for the work we do. We are ill-paid, every one of us, from the chief downwards. People think there are fat emoluments in our department, but we could very soon undeceive them.'

'You're quite right,' I sighed, for with us in the diplomatic service, as with those at home in Downing Street, there is a perpetual grumble regarding the cheeseparing policy of the Government. Many of the chief positions of trust are absurdly ill-paid. 'However,' I added, 'you ought not to grumble, now that you are comfortably off. Look at me! The old governor left me twenty-five thousand when he died six years ago, and I'm nearly at the end of it already.'

'Vienna cost you a lot, I suppose.'

'Dearest place in Europe,' I answered. 'I had to keep horses and go the pace thoroughly. A fellow with only his salary can't live in Vienna. He'd be snubbed by everybody, and in three months life would be intolerable.'

'And how about your new appointment?'

'Gay, but not quite so expensive,' I responded. 'I must lie low for a time; then things will be brighter with me. I can't go on at the pace I've been going.'

'No,' he said, a trifle coldly. 'Take my tip, old man, and live a bit more economically. Your extravagance in Vienna was noticed.'

I smiled. Had not Lord Macclesfield himself commended me for my work in Vienna; and had I not, in order to perform that mission—a secret one—been compelled to spend my own money recklessly to gain success? His lordship alone knew the reason of my extravagance, and had congratulated me upon my vigorous action.

We gossiped on for perhaps half-an-hour, then strolled along to the 'Ship,' that small restaurant a few doors from Charing Cross where so many Foreign Office men take their lunch. There we ate our midday chops together, and then, when I had satisfied myself upon one or two points regarding his wife, we parted.

What he had told me did not allay my fears. The facts that she was an orphan, that she had lived with an aunt in an unknown country village, and that she had inherited money were all suspicious. No, I could not rid myself of a most uncomfortable feeling, a kind of presage of some coming evil. That look of triumph and hatred in her blue eyes was ever before me, haunting me night and day. She meant mischief.

Yes, now more than ever was I confident that she possessed the secret which I had foolishly thought none knew besides myself.

Next day I left London on a round of dutiful visits to various friends in the north; and, as it was a particularly dry winter, I managed to get a good deal of enjoyment and plenty of outdoor exercise. To me, tired of the hot, dusty, evil-smelling streets of Constantinople, English rural life was an exceedingly pleasant change; and for nearly three weeks I made one of a particularly gay house-party at Dedisham, Sir Henry Halsford's place beside the Arun in Sussex. There were about fifteen guests besides myself; and, as many of them were young, there was an unvarying round of gaiety.

Among the men staying there, one was a quiet fellow of middle age named Poynter, a relative of Lady Halsford's, to whom I took a particular fancy. We often walked or rode out together, and in the evening we would play billiards, or smoke and chat about the Continental capitals I knew. He was a man of leisure, who had travelled constantly in Europe, as so many men do, for the purpose of obtaining a decent climate, spending each winter in Nice, spring at Florence or Aix or Biarritz, summer in Switzerland, and autumn in Scotland, until he had become, like myself, a thorough cosmopolitan.

One dry, bright afternoon we had together walked over the hill to Dewestryde to make a call on some people, and were returning along the Sinfold Road, past the quaint old windmill which is a landmark in that part of rural Sussex, when, having passed through the quiet little hamlet of Rowhook, our conversation chanced to turn upon the political outlook in Europe.

'Things appear black,' he said as he strode on by my side, both of us heedless of the rain which had commenced to fall. 'In every part of the world other nations seem to show unfriendliness towards England.'

'Quite so,' I said, with a sigh. 'A European war would surprise nobody.'

'It is you diplomatic people whose duty it is to prevent war,' he said, with a smile.

'A good many very acute difficulties are yearly adjusted by our ambassadors and the public remain in ignorance. The papers, for instance, have never been able to show the public how active we have been of late at Constantinople. A dozen times within the last three months we've been on the verge of war with Russia over the eternal Eastern Question.'

'On the verge of war!' he exclaimed, surprised.

'Yes,' I answered. 'And had it not been for the tact and clever diplomacy of my chief, backed by Lord Macclesfield's firm policy at home, we might by this time have had Cossack sentries outside Buckingham Palace.'

'Is it possible? Do you think that such a disaster might ever occur?' he inquired.

'Quite,' I responded. 'With others of my profession I share certain misgivings regarding our naval and military strength. France, Russia, and

Germany are all three our possible enemies; and with such Powers against her England would have to strain every effort to preserve her own. How near we often are to hostilities with the Powers jealous of our position as rulers of the world only we at the embassies know. Our country may thank itself that at this moment its ambassadors are, without exception, calm, level-headed men, who carry out to the letter the instructions of their chief. The Opposition press, and those irresponsible little journalistic curs whose bark is more furious than their bite, may rail at us whenever one of the other Powers have seemingly got the better of us; but they never pause to consider whether discretion is not oftentimes the better part of valour, or whether to conciliate is better than to provoke a costly and bloody war.'

'Quite true,' Poynter said. 'The papers are far too fond of making political capital out of our complications abroad. They no doubt form easy subjects for what is journalistically known, I believe, as second leaders. I remember,' he went on, 'when I was in Vienna a couple of years ago, how strained were our political relations with Russia.'

'Two years ago!' I said. 'Why, I was there at that time.'

'Then you remember, of course, how the machinations of Russia against Austria were suddenly exposed by the publication in the press of reports made by a secret agent. It was said that this exposure was brought about by some one in the British Embassy who, at the risk of his life, tracked down the spy and succeeded in getting from him certain plans of the frontier fortresses which he had prepared, together with some documents stolen from the archives of the embassy. Was that true?'

I held my breath, glancing at him furtively. We were skirting Furnace Wood, a dark, gloomy place, and the rain was now falling so heavily that I was nearly wet through.

'I do not know the exact truth,' I stammered, after a moment's hesitation.

'Well,' he said, 'if the exposure was due to anybody in the embassy he ought to have been well rewarded, for it threw a side-light on the byways of Russian diplomacy which not only aroused indignation all over Europe, but thwarted a plan which would have undoubtedly resulted in war if it had been successful.'

'Yes,' I answered; 'I remember the published facts quite well. We were then actually on the verge of hostilities. As we say at the embassies, the chief always sits on the edge of the volcano. He never knows when the eruption is to take place, but must always be on the alert and in readiness to combat any conspiracy against British prestige and power.'

'We ought to be thankful indeed,' my companion said, 'that we have so many excellent

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and talented men looking after our interests abroad; for it would be a sorry day for England if war ever broke out.'

'Yes,' I said. 'The Jingoës would certainly receive a heavy blow.' Then in silence we both plodded on along the wet road, the mud splashing with each step, until, in the growing gloom, we saw the old ivy-covered house through the early-budding trees.

How strange it was, I reflected, that this stroke of diplomacy I had myself effected unaided was remembered, even in this later rush of exciting events! Until that evening at Richmond, when I had dined with Gordon and his wife, I had confidently hoped that it was all forgotten. Yet this man, with whom I had come into contact quite by accident, remembered every detail of that action which I was always striving to forget.

He had said that I deserved a rich reward for laying bare a base conspiracy against England's honour. What, I wondered, would he say if he knew the ghastly truth? My reward had been promotion to Constantinople, and now nearer home to a secret and responsible mission in the Belgian capital. True, I had strained every nerve in that long-past affair, and had been successful where all others had failed. Yet at what terrible cost had that vile plot been unmasked! I had saved the honour of England at the cost of my own! That woman who was my friend's wife alone knew the truth.

But I had little time then for reflection, for we were soon indoors; and, after changing, I was compelled to join the ladies for tea in the old-fashioned, low-ceilinged drawing-room, where the wood fire burned brightly, throwing out a wel-

come, flickering light which danced upon the tea-cups and the service of shining silver, and where the gossip was light and the laughter merry. Lady Halsford was a brilliant and tactful hostess, and was always able to gather about her a happy house-party. When I had been appointed abroad I at first missed the shooting and fishing which I had so much enjoyed at country-houses; but now, after a few years, I fear I had grown to be so much of a foreigner that I preferred a warm drawing-room and feminine chatter to tramping over fields after game. The elegant foreigner looks askance at the Englishman's zeal for sport, and is quite content to cycle on public roads attired in wonderful suits and sweaters, for the admiration of his fellows. Beyond that he has no further desire to distinguish himself. If he hunts or shoots it is not because he likes it, but because he considers it correct form. The educated foreigner always apes the Englishman.

Many pleasant chats I had with Poynter during the week I still remained at Dedisham; and as he announced his intention of coming to Brussels for a month or so in spring, I expressed a hope to meet him there. On leaving Sussex I first returned for a few days to Warwick Gardens, then went north to gray old Lancaster, and afterwards spent a few days with my brother Frank, whose regiment, the 7th Hussars, was stationed at York, my leave, however, being cut short by the receipt of a formal letter from the chief's private secretary, asking me to call at the Foreign Office on the following day. Therefore I left, and next day at noon once more ascended the grand staircase which led to the great statesman's private room.

## THE 'PALU' OF THE EQUATORIAL PACIFIC.

By LOUIS BECKE.



**D**URING a residence of half a lifetime among the various island-groups of the North-western and South Pacific, I devoted much of my spare time—and I had plenty of it occasionally—to deep-sea fishing, my tutors being the natives of the Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, and Ellice groups.

The inhabitants of the last-named cluster of islands I consider to be the most skilled fishermen of all the Malayo-Polynesian peoples with whom it has been my fortune to have come in contact. The very poverty of their island homes—mere sandbanks covered with coco-nut and pandanus palms only—drives them to the sea for their food; for the Ellice Islanders, unlike their more fortunate prototypes who dwell in the forest-clad, mountainous, and fertile islands of Samoa, Tahiti, Raratonga, &c., live almost exclusively

upon coco-nuts, the drupes of the pandanus palm, and fish. From their very infancy they look to the sea as the main source of their food-supply, either in the clear waters of the lagoon, among the breaking surf on the reef, or out in the blue depths of the ocean beyond. From morn till night the frail canoes of these semi-nude, brown-skinned, and fearless toilers of the sea may be seen by the voyager paddling swiftly over the rolling swell of the wide Pacific in chase of the bonito, or lying motionless upon the water, miles and miles away from the land, ground-fishing with lines a hundred fathoms long. Then, as the sun dips, the flare of torches will be seen along the sandy beaches as the night-seekers of flying-fish launch their canoes and urge them through the rolling surf beyond the reef, where, for perhaps three or four hours, they will paddle slowly to and fro, just outside the white line of roaring

breakers, and return to the shore with their tiny craft half-filled with the most beautiful and wonderful fish in the world. The Ellice Island method of catching flying-fish would take too long to explain here, much as I should like to do so; my purpose is to describe a very remarkable fish called the *palu*, in the capture of which these people are the most skilful. The catching of flying-fish, however, bears somewhat on the subject of this article, as the *palu* will not take any other bait but a flying-fish, and therefore a supply of the former is a necessary preliminary.

Let us imagine, then, that the bait has been secured, and that a party of *palu*-fishers are ready to set out from the little island of Nanomaga, the smallest but most thickly populated of the Ellice group. The night must be windless and moonless, the latter condition being absolutely indispensable, although, curiously enough, the fish will take the hook on an ordinary starlight night. Time after time have I tried my luck with either a growing or a waning moon, much to the amusement of the natives, and never once did I get a *palu*, although other nocturnal-feeding fish bit freely enough, notably a monstrous species of seaperch called *la'heu*.

The tackle used by the natives is made of coco-nut sinnet, four or eight-stranded, of great strength, and capable of holding a fifteen-foot shark should one of these prowlers seize the bait. The hook is made of wood—in fact, the same as is used for shark-fishing—about one inch and a half in diameter, fourteen inches in the shank, with a natural curve, the barb, or rather that which answers the purpose of a barb, being supplied by a small piece lashed horizontally across the top of the end of the curve. These peculiar wooden hooks are *grown*; the roots of a tree called *ngia*, whose wood is of great toughness, are watched when they protrude from a bank and trained into the desired shape; specimens of these may be seen in almost any ethnographical museum. To sink the line, coral stones of three or four pounds weight are used, attached by a very thin piece of sinnet or bark, which, when the fish is struck, is always broken by its struggles, and falls off, thus releasing the line from an unnecessary weight. It is no light task hauling in a thick, heavy line, hanging straight up and down for a length of from seventy-five to a hundred fathoms or more.

Each canoe is manned by four men, only two of whom usually fish, the other two, one at the bow and the other at the stern, being engaged in keeping the little craft in a stationary position with their paddles. If, however, there is not much current all four lower their lines, one man working his paddle with one hand so as to keep from drifting. My usual companions were the resident native teacher and two stalwart young natives of the island—Tuluia and Muli'ao; and I

may here indulge in a little vanity when I say that my success as a *palu*-fisher was regarded as something phenomenal, only one other white man in the group, a trader on the atoll of Funafuti, having ever caught a *palu*, or, in fact, tried to catch one. But then I had such beautiful tackle that even the most skilled native fisherman had no chance when competing with me. My lines were of twenty-seven-strand white American cotton, as thick as a small goose-quill, and easily handled, never tangling or twisting like the native sinnet; and my hooks were the admiration and envy of all who saw them. They were of the 'flatted' Kirby type, eyed, but with a curve in the shank, which was five inches in length, and as thick as a lead-pencil. I had bought these in Sydney, and during the voyage down had rigged them with snoodings of the very best seizing wire, intending to use them for shark-fishing. I had smaller ones down to three inches, but always preferred using the largest size, as the *palu* has a large mouth, and it is a difficult matter in a small canoe on a dark night to free a hook embedded in the gullet of a fish which is awkward to handle even when exhausted, and weighing as much as sixty or seventy pounds; while I also knew that any unusual noise or commotion would be almost sure to attract two or three of those most dangerous of all night-prowlers of the Pacific, the deep-water blue shark.

Paddling out due westward from the lee side of the island, where the one village is situated, we would bring-to in about seventy or eighty fathoms. As I always used leaden sinkers, my companions invariably let me lower first to test the depth, as with a two or three pound lead my comparatively thin line took but little time in running out and touching bottom. A whole flying-fish was used for one bait by the natives, it being tied on to the inner curve of the great wooden hook, whilst I cut one in half, fore-and-aft, and ran my hook through it lengthwise.

The utmost silence was always observed; and even when lighting our pipes we were always careful not to let the reflection of the flame of the match fall upon the water, on account of the sharks, which would at once be attracted to the canoe, and hover about until they were rewarded for their vigilance by seizing the first *palu* brought to the surface. Sometimes a hungry shark will seize the outrigger in his jaws, or get foul of it, and upset the canoe, and a capsizing under such circumstances is a serious matter indeed. For this reason the canoes are never far apart from each other; if one should be attacked or disabled by a shark the others at once render assistance, and the shark is usually thrust through with a lance if he is too big to be captured and killed. All haste is then made to get away from the spot, leaving the disturber of the proceedings to be devoured by his companions, whom the scent of blood soon brings upon the scene.

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With ordinary luck we would get our first *palu* within an hour of lowering our lines. At such a great depth as eighty or ninety fathoms a bite would scarcely be felt by one of my companions on his thick, heavy, and clumsy line; but on mine it was very different, and there was hardly an occasion on which I did not secure the first fish. Like most bottom-haunting fish in very deep water the *palu* makes but a brief fight. If he can succeed in getting his head, he will at once rush into the coral forest amid which he lives, and endeavour to save himself by jamming his body into a cleft or chasm of rock, and let the hook be torn from his jaws, which are soft, boneless, and glutinous. Once, however, he is dragged clear of the coral he seems to lose all heart; and, although he makes an occasional spurt, he grows weaker and weaker as he is dragged toward the surface, and when lifted into the canoe, is apparently lifeless, his large eyes literally standing out of his head, and his stomach distended like a balloon. So enormous is the distention of the bladder that sometimes it will protrude from the mouth, and then burst with a noise like a pistol-shot! Perhaps some of my readers will smile at this, but they could see the same thing occur with other deep-sea fish besides the *palu*. In the Caroline and Marshall Islands there is a species of gray groper which is caught in a depth ranging from one hundred to one hundred and fifty fathoms; these fish, which range up to two hundred pounds, actually burst their stomachs when brought to the surface; for the air in the cavities of the body expands on the removal of the great pressure which at such depths keeps it compressed.

Now as to the appearance of the *palu*. When first caught, and seen by the light of a lantern or torch, it is a dark silvery gray in colour, with prickly, inverted scales—like the feathers of a French fowl of a certain breed. The head is somewhat cod-shaped, with eyes quite as large as a crown-piece; the teeth are many, small, and soft, and bend to a firm pressure; and the bones in the fins and tail are so soft and flexible that they may be bent into any shape, but when dried are of the appearance and consistency of gelatine. The length of the largest *palu* I have seen was five feet six inches, with a girth of about forty inches. This one was caught in about ninety fathoms of water; and when I opened the stomach I found it to contain five or six undigested fish, about seven inches in length, of the groper species, and for which the natives of the island had no name nor knowledge of beyond the appellation *ika kehe*

—'unknown fish'—that is, fish which are only seen when taken from the stomach of a deep-sea fish or are brought to the surface or washed ashore after some submarine disturbance.

The flesh of the *palu* is greatly valued by the natives of the equatorial islands of the Pacific for its medicinal qualities as a laxative, whilst the oil with which it is permeated is much used as a remedy for rheumatism and similar complaints. Within half-an-hour of its being taken from the water the skin changes to a dead black, and the flesh assumes the appearance of whale blubber. Generally, the fish is cooked in the usual native ground-oven as quickly as possible, care being taken to wrap it closely up in the broad leaves of the *puraka* plant—a species of gigantic taro—in order that none of the oil may be lost. Thinking that the oil, which is perfectly colourless and with scarcely any odour, might prove of value, I once 'tried out' two of the largest fish taken, and obtained a gallon. This I sent to a firm of drug-merchants in Sydney; but unfortunately the vessel was lost on the passage.

The *palu* does not seem to have a wide habitat. In the Tonga Islands it is, I believe, very rare, if not unknown; and in Fiji, Samoa, and other mountainous groups throughout Polynesia the natives appear to have no knowledge of it, although they have a fish possessing the same peculiar characteristics, but of a somewhat different shape. I have fished for it without success at half-a-dozen places in Samoa, in New Britain, and New Ireland. But it is generally to be found about the coasts of any of the low-lying coral islands of the Union (or Tokelau) group, the Ellice, Gilbert, Marshall, and part of the Caroline archipelagoes. The Gilbert Islanders call it *ika ne peka*—a name that cannot well be translated into bald English.

Of the marvellous efficacy of the oil in a case of acute rheumatism I can speak with knowledge. The second mate of an island-trading schooner was landed at Arorai, in the Line Islands, unable to move, and suffering great agony. After two days' massaging with *palu* oil he recovered and returned to his duties.

[Since this article was written I have learned that Mr E. R. Waite of the Sydney Museum has found that the *palu* is the well-known *Eucettus pretiosus*, 'which hitherto was known only from the North Atlantic, and whose recorded range is now enormously increased. The Escalar—to give it its Atlantic name—has been taken at depths as great as three and four hundred fathoms, but can only be taken at night in September and the early part of October.]



## YOU SING.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.



HIS discovery marked a new departure in our relations toward each other. Hitherto I had looked upon You Sing as I might have done upon a big faithful dog, but never dreamed of crediting him with any intelligent initiative. His behaviour so far had certainly justified me in this opinion; but now he became completely transformed. In the most energetic pantomime, and with strangely severe struggles to enunciate a few words of my language, he endeavoured to explain to me the origin of all these treasures. I did not find it hard to understand the general drift of his attempt to enlighten me, because I had already suspected something of what I was now gathering from him. Roughly, it was to the effect that the cargo we had relieved the junk of was the accumulated hoard of a nest of pirates who had long been preying upon such seafarers as they dared attack without fear of reprisals, and who were all deliberately slain after they had been plundered and their vessels scuttled. Then the wretches had turned their bloody hands against each other, and by so doing somewhat atoned for their innumerable crimes by ridding the world of two-thirds of the gang. The survivors then loaded up all the most valuable of the stored plunder into the most seaworthy junk they possessed, and, divesting her of all suspicious appearance, sailed for some port where they intended to dispose of their loot. Again Nemesis overtook them; they had befouled the seas too long. They stealthily murdered one another as opportunity served, until there were hardly enough of them left to handle the junk. You Sing was a slave who had done their cooking, having been spared for that purpose alone out of the entire crew of a large barque they had surprised one night. Doubtless his turn to perish had nearly arrived, when, going down into their storeroom under the cabin for some rice, he found himself in a sort of trap from which he was unable to escape. There he would certainly have perished of starvation, instead of sharing the unknown fate of the remnant of his tyrants, but for our intervention. And in various quaint ways he gave me to understand that he considered his life to belong to this ship and her crew, of whom the child asleep and my small self were now the sole representatives.

I could not bring myself to the point of heaving all those pretty things overboard; but seeing what a dread he had of them, I stowed them all in the late skipper's berth under his bed-place, in two large drawers, which I locked

and hung the key round my neck. Then, for the first time, I began to think about working the ship. Unfortunately I had not the faintest idea of which was the best direction to steer in, for I did not know, within at least a thousand miles, our position. I imagined, of course, that we were somewhere south of Formosa, and between that great island and the Philippines; but that was vague in the extreme. And I was in hourly terror of being sighted by a wandering junk of whatever character, feeling certain of a barbarous death at the hands of any of You Sing's countrymen who might happen to find such a prize as the *Blitzen*. How I longed for the sight of a smoke-wreath festooning the horizon! That vision would have nearly sent me crazy with joy. But I suppose we were far out of the track of steamers, for we saw no sign of one.

Aided most manfully and sensibly by You Sing, I clewed up the royals and topgallant sails with a view of making the vessel easier to handle, and with a great deal of labour managed to haul up the courses (mainsail and foresail) as well, taking the gear to the capstan where it was too heavy for our united efforts, until those great squares of canvas hung snug as they could be without being actually furled. Then, after long cogitation, I decided to make for the coast of China, which I knew must be west of us, and trust to a merciful God to bring us in sight of either some civilised port or ship before any of those calm, merciless pagans came across us. Now we each took a regular trick at the wheel (You Sing learned to do so in less than half-an-hour); and little Elsie, all her high spirits gone, and docile as You Sing himself, even took a spell at steering when we would let her. Heaven alone knows what our track would have looked like on the chart, but it's my belief that we were getting to the westward at the rate of about twenty miles a day for the best part of a week (I lost all count of time); and, though it seems hard to believe, I was actually beginning to feel quite important as the commander of a big vessel on the high seas. We fed well and we slept well—at least Elsie and I did; as for You Sing, I don't know whether he ever slept at all. He did all the cooking, kept everything clean and tidy, and was ever ready when called upon. Besides all this, he had won his way into the affections of Elsie; and I almost felt a pang of jealousy when I heard her clear laugh at some of the quaint antics he cut in order to amuse her. Had it not been for the one haunting dread of being overhauled by a junk, I believe we



should have been quite happy. For the terror of the past tragedy had faded from our minds, and the sea was kind and gentle, the soft breeze blew sweetly, though it varied a great deal, making our task of trimming the yards in order to keep the vessel somewhere near her course—due west—an uncommonly heavy one.

Then it fell a flat calm. Now, I had, even at that early age, all a sailor's horror of a calm, and this one troubled me more than any I had yet experienced. The silence was almost unbearable. I could not rest day or night—it lasted three days—for more than an hour or so at a time; and when I fell asleep from sheer weariness I always woke with my heart thumping furiously and in an icy sweat of fear. The inaction got upon my nerves, so that I began to hear strange noises, and to imagine that the dead crew were among us, grieving because we were yet alive, and scheming to secure our company. This state of mind grew upon me to such an extent that at last I dared not leave You Sing, clinging to him as the one hope I had of ever again seeing the land of the living. He—grave, careful, and kind as ever—accepted this entire change in our relative positions with the same serene behaviour as before; and in my worst mental trouble I had only to look into his eyes to be completely comforted. Elsie, strange to say, seemed quite happy. She was carelessly kind to me; but she loved our Chinese friend. A word or two from him, in an unintelligible jargon, would set her dancing with delight, and it was only during his unavoidable absence from her for a short time that she ever seemed to feel the misery of our position.

On the tenth evening (I think) of our loneliness, and the third of the calm, I was lolling against the useless wheel watching, with eyes that observed naught, the fantastic efforts of You Sing to amuse Elsie, when an appalling feeling of dread suddenly came over me. It was as if I was going to be violently sea-sick, and affected my limbs to such an extent that I slid down from the wheel to the deck. This disabling sensation was happily only momentary in its effect, so that I was able to rise to my feet again almost immediately, though trembling violently. Whatever mysterious cause had thus affected me I could not tell, and it was evidently peculiar to myself, for my two shipmates were still merry at their play. But I was desperately uneasy, fearing that I was going to be very ill. I left the deck and descended into the cabin, seeing, to my astonishment, several rats prowling uneasily about. They took scarcely any notice of me, and I was too upset to obey the momentary impulse to chase them. I sank down on a settee and tried to collect myself, but I was too uneasy to sit still, and soon wandered out on the main-deck again.

Aimlessly I slouched forrard and climbed up on

the fore-castle head. As soon as I reached it, on looking ahead I saw a sight that thickened my blood. Right before the vessel rose a dense mass of inky cloud extending over an arc of the horizon of about one-sixth of its circumference. It was dome-shaped, and upon its apex rested the descending sun, his glowing disc changed into a dull bronze-green ball that shed no light around. It looked as if the glorious orb was sick unto death. As I watched with growing anxiety, the painfully changed luminary sank slowly into that black mountain of gloom and disappeared. But above it the clear sky reflected its ghastliness, not by reason of its rays ascending, for it appeared to have none, but as if some unknown light from the bowels of the earth had broken through the sea and was thus disfiguring the beautiful face of the heavens.

Tearing myself away from the disabling fascination of the sight, I returned to the poop, noticing with much satisfaction that my trembling had almost ceased. I found You Sing and Elsie sitting on a hen-coop watching with solemn faces the rising gloom ahead in perfect silence, all their pleasant play at an end. Meeting You Sing's eye, I read therein a reflection of my own concern, and in an instant we understood each other. Doubtless, it being his native country, he understood the ominous signs far better than I, although even the child could see and feel that something terrible was impending; and as I went up to her to coax her below he murmured in my ear two words of pure Chinese, which, because they have passed into the English language, I understood at once: '*Ty foong!*' They rang through my brain like a sentence of death; but I actually felt some relief at knowing the worst. For if we were about to encounter a typhoon in our utter helplessness either to prepare for it by furling sail, or to handle the vessel in any way, what hope could there be of our survival? But there is a certain satisfaction in knowing that, whatever happens, it is no fault of yours; that you can do nothing of any service but just endure and hope. And that was exactly our position.

We got Elsie down below without alarming her, laid in a stock of fresh water in the cabin, and barricaded the doors opening on to the main-deck. Then we got some old sails up from the locker and covered the cabin skylight, lashing it down as securely as we knew how. The cabin being as secure as we could make it, we braced the yards sharp up on the starboard tack (although I don't know why I chose that side, I'm sure), for I had a dim idea that we should stand a better chance so than with the yards square as they were, since I knew very well that in heavy gales of wind a vessel ought to be hove to, and that that was always effected by bracing the yards forrard. Then I let go the topsail-sheets and lowered the upper topsails down on the cap. We also hauled all the jibs and stay-sails down, making them as snug as

we could. Last of all I put the helm hard down and lashed it there. My hope was that in the first burst of the tempest the big sails that were loose would blow away, and that the vessel would then heave herself to naturally, although I knew well enough that if caught by the lee she would probably capsize or drive under stern foremost.

While we had been thus busy the rising pall of clouds had imperceptibly grown until exactly half of the concave above was perfectly black—black as the adit of a coal-mine. The other half astern was of an ugly green tint, as unlike the deep violet of the night sky in those latitudes as could well be imagined. Its chief peculiarity, though, was its light. That segment of the sky was full of glare, diffused light that was even reflected on to the vessel, and yet could not be traced to any definite source. The contrast between this uncanny radiance and the *crêpe*-like darkness of the other half of the sky was tremendous, and of itself enough to inspire fear in the breast of any creature living.

Presently, as we watched in strained silence, came the beginning of what we were to know; a twining golden webwork of electric fires all over the swart roof of cloud, or whatever that gloom was built of, and in a hot puff of wind the destroying genie of the tropics uplifted the opening strains of his song. All cries of uttermost woe

were blended in it as it faintly fell upon our ears, indistinctly as if echoed and re-echoed from immeasurable distances, but growing louder and wilder with every burning breath. Then, in one furious blast, accompanied by a cracking blaze of lightning, the typhoon burst upon us. It was just sufficiently on the starboard bow to avoid catching us aback, and the vessel paid off, heeling over to its force until her lee rail was awash, and the gleaming foam toppled inboard in a smother of pale light. Lower and lower the sky descended until it seemed as if we might have reached upward and touched it; and, unable to bear the sight any longer, I fled below, followed by You Sing, and securely fastened the scuttle behind us.

Elsie was asleep when I peeped into her room, for which I felt profoundly thankful; for how could we have comforted her? I sat down by You Sing's side and looked up wonderingly into his impassive face, which, as usual, was lighted by a tender smile as he met my troubled gaze. He took hold of my hand and patted it, murmuring his shibboleth, 'Ullo, Tommy;' and in spite of my terrors I smiled. Outside, the uproar was beyond description; but except that we lay over at a most dangerous angle we were fairly steady. The force of the wind did not permit the sea to rise, and so between sleeping and waking that awful night passed.

## VICTUALLING A MAN-OF-WAR.

By LEONARD W. LILLINGTON.

**G**OD sent the food, but the devil sent the cooks,' seems to have been a sea-going proverb in the first place; and one of the deadliest insults on shipboard is to call a man the 'son of a sea-cook.' However, their lordships of the Admiralty are not directly responsible for the shortcomings of the cook; and the provisions now supplied to our jack-tars are in the main of excellent quality.

There are three principal home victualling-yards: the Royal Victoria at Deptford, the Royal Clarence at Gosport, and the Royal William at Queenstown. There are victualling depôts abroad: at Gibraltar, Halifax, Bermuda, Jamaica, the Cape of Good Hope, Trincomalee, Hong-kong, Esquimaux, and Sydney.

In the three home yards practically all the biscuit is made. Ship's biscuit is really good, though you want a sound set of teeth to fully appreciate it. The ship's company eat it as supplied; in the officers' mess it is usually baked a second time, which improves it vastly. As for the weevils so constantly referred to in the nautical novel, it is impossible to keep weevils out of any biscuit after a time.

Flour and oatmeal are manufactured at all three of the yards, while at Deptford the chocolate, mustard, and pepper are ground. A considerable number of articles bought by contract also pass through the Deptford yard, including rum, tobacco, lime juice, salt, preserved meat, medical comforts, and clothing. The strategical position of Deptford makes it an excellent centre of distribution for the other home yards as well as for the depôts abroad.

The Deptford yard stretches half a mile along the river, from Deadman's Rock to the market for foreign cattle. It includes clothing-stores, filled with ready-made suits ready for issue to replace the worn-out uniforms. The supplies of clothing include many thousands of pairs of boots, caps, and articles of underclothing, also the canvas suits worn by the men when engaged in scrubbing down the decks or other dirty work. The pickled pork stored in the yard comes from Prussia, the mutton from Australia, and the tins of beef from America. The stock of tobacco averages twenty thousand pounds. It is imported duty-free, and costs the Admiralty fivepence per pound. From thirty thousand to forty thousand gallons of rum are kept ready for issue. The overproof rum is diluted there—four

parts with one of water. The mixing vats are of huge dimensions; the largest of them has a capacity of thirty-three thousand gallons. Forty thousand pounds of chocolate are also kept in readiness, and half-a-million gallons of oil. All the casks for packing the provisions are made in the yard, and the output amounts to many thousands in the course of the year. Victualling includes not only food but stores of all kinds. Thus, there are thousands of yards of canvas for use as shrouds, and operating boards, wooden legs, hands, and arms, besides other surgical appliances. The utensils used in the preparation of the food—called 'mess traps'—are also supplied by the Admiralty.

Wines and spirits are laid in by the officers at their own cost. The quantity, however, is limited by the wants of each mess. The orders to the wine-merchant must be 'vised' by the captain, and he is supposed to keep a careful eye on the amount consumed. The officers no longer receive rations of rum, but a small allowance in money instead; nor is it issued to seamen under twenty years of age. Before being served out to the crew it is again diluted in the proportion of one part of rum to three parts of water. This is grog, which derives its name from Admiral Vernon. He it was who first diluted the rum. He habitually wore a program coat, and went by the name of Old Grog. The barrel is broached on deck at the dinner-hour, and each man comes forward with his pannikin in turn. All Government stores are marked in some way so that they can be readily identified. The rum has a small quantity of finely chopped hair introduced into it, which can be detected by holding it up to the light.

Rations of tea or chocolate can be had instead of rum, or the value of it is credited as 'savings.' This applies to most of the provisions. For example, a mess of twenty-four men would be entitled to draw twenty-four pounds of pork. They claim instead, perhaps, only eighteen pounds, and are allowed fourpence per pound for the balance. On salt beef the allowance is only three-halfpence per pound, on tinned beef five-pence per pound, on suet fourpence per pound, on rum three shillings a gallon, cocoa fivepence per pound, tea a shilling per pound. These savings are generally pooled by the mess and spent at the 'dry canteen.'

The 'dry canteen' plays an important though unofficial part in the victualling of a man-of-war. It is, in fact, a grocery shop, where the various messes can supplement the provisions

supplied by the Admiralty. At naval depôts it is generally run by a local tradesman; but on sea-going ships it is under the management of a committee, and is conducted on a co-operative basis.

Fresh meat and vegetables, whenever procurable, take the place of the salt beef, salt pork, and tinned meat. In fact, when the ship is in harbour salt beef must not be issued at all, and only once a week abroad, except under special circumstances. There are contractors for the supply of fresh meat, bread, and vegetables at all the ports of call in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The fresh meat is always cut up by the ship's butcher in some public part of the ship.

The men are 'lime-juiced' under the orders of the medical officer. The stokers are allowed an extra quantity, and as much oatmeal-water as they choose. Special rations of tea, coffee, or chocolate may be ordered at the discretion of the captain for men serving on night watches. Special delicacies in the form of preserves and potted meats are allowed to ships' companies on active service in unhealthy countries. A surveying party up the Zambesi river, for example, would be entitled to some small extra luxuries.

Tobacco, which comes under the head of victualling, is served out once a month—a pound per man on a home station and two pounds on a foreign station. Ships' tobacco is always in the leaf. When chewing was in vogue it was supplied in plugs or cakes. The few remaining sailors who chew make their own plugs out of the leaf with the aid of a little rum.

There is an elaborate victualling scale. Prisoners, leave-breakers, and stragglers receive only two-thirds of the full allowance. A prisoner on the way home who volunteers to help to work the ship receives the full allowance, but no grog. Non-naval persons are victualled at two-thirds. The master-at-arms supplies a daily return to the ship's office of those whose grog has been stopped for punishment. The value of the grog in this case is not credited as savings except in the case of habitual drunkards.

The accountant officer is the victualling authority on board. He keeps the captain informed as to the requirements of the ship. Should the stores run low the allowances are reduced all round, from the captain down to the ship's boy. The provisions thus withheld are credited as savings. But that must be poor consolation at the time to hungry stomachs.



## THE NEW WAITER AT THE BOATHOUSE INN.

## A TALE OF OLD PARKGATE.

By EDWARD KERNS.



THE night of November 5, 1797, was so replete with incident for the dwellers at Parkgate, on the Cheshire shore of the Dee estuary, that for some time to come all local events of importance were described as having taken place so long before or so long after that eventful evening.

There had been a light fall of snow—the first snow that winter; but the busy traffic of foot-passengers over the Parade, and of wheeled vehicles over the roadway, had almost obliterated it. As often happens, the higher Welsh coast opposite had first caught the skirts of the snow-clouds as they trailed heavily up from the sea, and the outlines of the whitened hills of Clwyd, which under ordinary circumstances would have been invisible on a moonless night, now faintly showed their undulating summits in the bright starlight, with Moel Famman—the ‘Mother of the Hills’—keeping a shadowy watch and ward over them. Clusters of tiny gems marked the whereabouts of Flint Castle and town, and of Holywell and other centres; but in the intervening spaces the lights were few and far between. Non-existent was the buzz of the Holyhead trains which now intermittently steals across the four and a half miles of estuary, and only the weird cries of the gulls and the shrill whistle of the curlews broke the sombre silence which brooded beyond the quays.

The desolate outlook but served to accentuate the bustle of the thriving little port. Parkgate was at this time, and for long afterwards, the principal northern gateway to Ireland, and a stream of people of all sorts and conditions ebbed and flowed with the tides, or—to the delight of mine host—abode in one or other of the snug hostleries so thickly dotted along the Parade, until the wind blew fair for the Emerald Isle. Every few yards there was an inn (fourteen have vanished within living memory); so that an almost continuous stream of light was shed from the windows, and, where the snow was yet untrodden, stained it with ruddy patches.

The tumult which nightly attended the arrival of the London coach had subsided, and a quaintly-rigged Dublin packet, which had just discharged its cargo, rocked lightly at anchor a few yards from the shore; while, by the side of one of the red sandstone wharves, another packet was being rapidly filled with merchandise, preparatory to sailing with the morning tide. Several post-chaises, bearing wealthy passengers who preferred not to wait for the early morning coach, had set off, with much cracking of the postillions' whips, for West Chester, as the ancient cathedral-town

a dozen miles up the river was then generally termed. The curtains of the large room of the Mostyn Hotel (now a flourishing school) were only partly drawn, and within could be seen a gay group of travellers. The smartly-cut coats and knee-breeches of the gentlemen, their spotless linen, powdered wigs, and profusely ornamented court swords, coupled with their gallant bearing, marked them as persons of distinction; while the ladies of the party had their attractions set off by the rich dresses, high-heeled shoes with gleaming buckles, powder, patches, and other frivolities of the time.

Several passers-by loitered to gaze at the fascinating picture thus presented to their view; and on the roadway a straggling band of urchins were attempting to march in military order under the commands of a slim boy of some ten years, who, with a broken-pointed cutlass, was gallantly leading them on to ‘fight the French.’ Notwithstanding their valour, and the snatches of patriotic songs which dissolved at brief intervals into shrill cheers, they did not court the shadows, and never wandered far from the lighted portion of the Parade; for at that time the name of the arch-enemy of mankind had given place to ‘Bonaparte’ as a terror to small boys, and angry parents had threatened them with a sudden visitation of the latter so often that their youthful minds invariably associated him with the powers of darkness. To and fro the band of miniature warriors marched until at the limit of one of their perambulations near the Neston turning they came face to face with an advancing couple—a man and a woman.

The man was rather over the medium height and powerfully built, with huge sloping shoulders and long arms. He wore a claret-coloured coat with numerous brass buttons on either side, and a pair of baggy breeches of the same material buttoned over his coarse blue hose. His heavy shoes were fastened with massive brass buckles, and a bright red silk handkerchief was loosely knotted around his brawny neck over a coarse but clean white linen shirt. His round swarthy face was clean shaven and heavily marked with smallpox. Tiny gold earrings adorned the lobes of his ears, and his small dark eyes were apparently perpetually twinkling with good humour. He walked with the lumbering tread of a ploughman, and the most casual observer would at once set him down as a French peasant. He was accompanied by a tall and very erect lady, much younger than himself, with well-moulded features of a somewhat aquiline and melancholy cast, and expressive dark eyes. She was well but plainly dressed. Her rather large feet were neatly shod,



and several rings adorned the shapely hand which was employed in holding closely around her a large circular cloak of blue cloth. Unlike her companion, she walked with a firm, quick step, with which he kept pace with evident difficulty.

The man was at once recognised by the army, and was hailed by them as 'Froggy;' while one of them varied this epithet by calling out, 'Boney, Boneyparty!' A dozen current witticisms at the expense of Frenchmen generally, and alluding to their supposed inferiority to Englishmen, were hurled at him; while the leader pretended to dispute his passage with the broken weapon.

The Frenchman caressed their boyish heads with parental fondness as he pushed by with the words, 'Gud boys! gud boys! Now let ze laadee pass.' Cries of 'He has to run! he has to run!' pursued him as he hurried along the Parade. His trading excursions, not to mention certain shady smuggling transactions, had brought him through Parkgate for many years, and he was well known to a large circle there.

Soon the watch-house—standing, as it still does, half-way out upon the road, as if it had elbowed its way forward the better to look out upon the broad estuary—loomed up in the semi-darkness before the couple. A portion of it was roofed and glazed, to protect the watchers from the strong westerly gales, while the broad stone steps and the landing to which they led was open to the weather.

On the topmost stair one of the local revenue officers—a short, broad man, with bronzed face, peaked gray beard, and keen bluish-gray eyes, and with the general aspect of an old veteran—was poising a large telescope in a sling on the outer edge of the wall, and closely scrutinising the black veil which intruded itself between the quay and Hilbre Island. The shoulders of his semi-military coat were powdered over with snow, and a heavy cutlass was tightly girt about his waist.

The Frenchman made out the figure while yet some distance away, and he and his companion came to a full stop, and stood for a little time whispering together and closely scrutinising the actions of the officer before approaching the watch-house. Fully fifty yards away the Frenchman called out in facetious tones, 'I say, monsieur, John Bull Whitehead, what you look out there for? Ha, ha! you tink you see Napoleon coming along—eh!'

'Hullo, Froggy, hullo!' responded the watcher, closing his glass with a snap, 'are you back again? Nay, Boney knows better nor come in this quarter. I was watching the Gunpowder Plot fire at Mostyn;' and he pointed over the estuary considerably to the left of where he had actually been looking. 'If you squint across you can see it with your naked eye—beggin' the lady's pardin.'

Froggy followed the direction of the officer's finger, and with difficulty made out a small leaping tongue of flame distinguishable by its reddish tinge from the pale fixed lights on the Flintshire shore.

'I wish I 'ave your eyes,' the Frenchman exclaimed as he moved on.

'If you could see what I was doing from where you stood, my ould un, they didn't make you a bad pair,' the revenue man muttered to himself as he laid down the glass and began vigorously to clap his numbed arms together; adding, 'I'd naythur tell you nor no other frog what I was looking for.' Then, as if refreshing his memory: "'Three flashes and a flash," that's the word they sent down. See a light I sartinly did; but see "three flashes and a flash" I sartinly did not.'

The Boathouse Inn marked, as its crumbling site still marks, the extreme end of the Parade; and, beyond, the fields and the shores stretched away to the distant sea-coast. The Mostyn Hotel was patronised by the notables; the Boathouse Inn was frequented by numerous sailors, fishermen, ostlers, post-chaise drivers, anchor-smiths, &c., in addition to shoals of individuals of every known occupation, who were continually setting through Parkgate. The large room overlooking the beach rang with song and mirth. A popular song with a swinging chorus was in full progress, and at the end of each verse the pewters rained applause upon the long oak table with a din akin to that of the shipwrights' mallets in a graving-dock, while the old lattice-window rattled in unison in its ancient frame as the Frenchman and his companion passed beneath it, and crept stealthily into the darkness in the rear of the group of buildings, making their way to the opposite side of an unused limekiln some fifty yards farther on.

After carefully scrutinising the vicinity, the lady drew a dark-lantern from her cloak, and, turning towards Hilbre Island, turned the slide of the lantern four times, allowing a lengthy pause between the third and fourth flash. Out of the darkness, some five miles away, came like an echo four answering sparks of light, divided by similar intervals; and almost on the instant the bow of a small boat grated on the beach, and the solitary occupant, a fisherman, sprang lightly ashore.

The new-comer might have sat for the portrait of a Viking. He wore his sixty years lightly, and his tawny beard was unflecked with gray, while his tall figure was erect, and he stepped out across the sands with the suppleness of a youth. 'John' was the name given to him by his sponsors, but the *alias* of 'Ould Uncle' had been welded to him in his early boyhood, and had stuck to him as only a Parkgate nickname can.

Dark as it was, he and the Frenchman recognised each other, and the latter held out his hand with an uneasy laugh. 'Uncle,' however, brushed by, exclaiming breathlessly, 'Out of the road, Froggy; out of the road. There's trouble down at Tinker's Dale; and if some of your dirty countrymen don't get lodgings at Chester Castle to-morrow my name's not Uncle Mealor.'

Before the last word had left his lips the Frenchman had him by the throat.

'Why, what the hangment!'— he began ; and then, realising that his opponent was in serious earnest, he locked him in an iron grip, and a deadly struggle began. To and fro and round and round they swung in a grim silence, unbroken save by their panting breath and the crunching sound of their feet on the gravel of the beach.

The struggle was short. In a few moments it was the Frenchman's throat that was being compressed, and he threw up his hands as he felt himself being borne irresistibly to the ground.

At this point the female, who had been darting hither and thither about the combatants, seeking an opportunity to deliver an effective blow, brought the heavy lantern down on Uncle's head with terrific force, and rapidly repeated the blow again and again, at the same time hissing in French to her exhausted countryman, 'The knife, fool—the knife !'

The next moment Uncle staggered back, and crying out faintly to the merry-makers, 'O Lord ! mates, help ; I'm murdered !' fell like a log.

The female stood, listening intently, to ascertain if the disturbance had been noticed at the 'Boathouse,' and the Frenchman vainly tried to stifle the sound of his laboured breathing as he too strained his ears ; but there was no lull in the carousal, and a score of lusty voices could be heard uproariously lifted together in a rhyme which had become immensely popular at Parkgate :

'Says Boney to Johnny, "I'm comin' to Dover;  
And when I come over I'll be come, I'll be come."  
Says Johnny to Boney, "You're coming to Dover;  
And when you come over you'll be overcome."'

The last line was repeated several times with great gusto.

On the very brink of the tide, and even nearer to the guilty party than the 'Boathouse' itself, stood the Long Row, facetiously so called ; its later sobriquet of William and Mary's Row afterwards attaching itself to it owing to the fact that a William and Mary occupied each of the four humble tenements.

The slight disturbance, however, had been unnoticed. The dim lights continued to burn steadily in the windows ; and so still was the night that, between the bursts of song, the air was filled with the moaning voice of the surf, as it battled with the Cambrian rocks fully a score of miles away.

A hurried consultation took place. By proceeding along the shore they would almost certainly fall into the hands of one or other of the coastguard patrols. By taking possession of one of the small boats, and attempting to steer their own course down the river, they would almost as certainly stick fast on one of the numerous sandbanks with which the fishermen were so familiar. Finally, they decided to obtain the services of a fisherman and boat, and with this object they dragged the body of Uncle into the deep shadow of the kiln, and retraced their steps to the 'Boathouse.'

## II.

Rumour had it that the latest addition to the staff of the Boathouse Inn owed an old score, and was working it off in the capacity of waiter ; and the general opinion among the customers was that he was a bad bargain even at that price. He had a very long body and very short legs ; this physical peculiarity being further much emphasised by a coat which had once been blue, the long tails reaching half-way down his podgy-looking calves. He wore a frowzy mouse-coloured wig and a bleary owl-like expression of wisdom that evidently covered the most dense stupidity. He carried an ample supply of snuff in his capacious waistcoat pockets ; and, extracting it sometimes from the right pocket, sometimes from the left, with his thumb and finger, sonorously inhaled a portion and flung away the remainder with a contemptuous flirt of his fingers that sent a tiny cloud floating over the pewters and glasses in a manner that was peculiarly distressful to poor toppers with a squeamish stomach. He invariably met the incoming coaches and post-chaises, holding forth to the travellers with a very strong Welsh accent upon the superior accommodation of the 'Boathouse,' and seldom left the stranger until he had elicited a verbal reply, after which he at once turned his attention to some one else. He was the constant butt of the company in the 'Boathouse' taproom ; but he appeared quite ignorant of the fact, notwithstanding the very personal nature of the sallies levelled at him.

'Now then, you old Welsh tup [ram], you ; sharpen your stumps' [quicken your pace], bawled a drover at the far-end of the room, the speaker himself being so thoroughly Welsh that he could with difficulty make himself understood.

The solemnity with which the waiter received the remark caused much hilarity ; and as he reached the door a little bandy-legged ostler touched his shoulder, remarking in a serious undertone, but loud enough to be heard by the company, 'Tell you what, ould master, if I'd a pair of legs like your'n I'd cut 'em off !'

A loud burst of laughter followed the waiter through the door ; and ere it ended the French man and woman entered the room, the former smiling away like clockwork upon the company, many of whom were well known to him. They were closely followed by Whitehead, who, having been relieved at the watch-house, had come to thaw his inner man with a jorum of rum.

The Frenchman was greeted good-humouredly by several of the company, most of whom, however, exhibited some reserve owing to the presence of the lady. This vanished immediately, however, and a fisherman, far gone in ale, rose unsteadily to his feet, and in a jocular strain attempted the lines, 'Says Boney to Johnny,' &c.

The foreigner, still smiling imperturbably, ordered a bowl of punch 'for his good friends to

drink the health of his only daughter,' whom he had brought over to see the country, and who at the remark bestowed a languid smile upon the company.

The arrival of the foreign lady and gentleman had an effect upon the new waiter. For a moment his slipshod manner seemed to drop from him, and he received the generous order almost with alacrity. He took snuff from both pockets in quick succession, and gave a quick nod of acquiescence; but dropped almost at once into his customary listless manner, and shuffled from the room even more limply than before.

After placing the bowl on the table before the Frenchman, the waiter sat down on a vacant seat at the opposite side of the table; but the taproom fraternity of the 'Boathouse' were not wont to stand upon etiquette, and the action attracted no attention.

The glasses were filled, and an elderly packet-man rose to his feet and began to expatiate on the fact that, although he was a Frenchman by birth, Froggy after all was such a good fellow that some of his ancestors must certainly have gone over from England; when he suddenly stopped, and a thrill ran through the room, for a strange and powerful voice, and a voice, moreover, that thrilled with authority, was suddenly uplifted above the words of the toast.

Looking down, they saw that the new waiter's elbows rested on the table, and a pair of long-barrelled pistols were levelled from them directly at the heads of the foreigners. His face was completely transformed, as his piercing glance rested on the cowering pair before him, and was so lighted up with animation that he was almost unrecognisable. His figure, too, seemed to dilate, as, without a trace of the Welsh accent, there rang out the words:

'I, William Shone, an officer of Bow Street, call upon all loyal subjects of King George here present to assist me to take into lawful custody the bodies of Jean Colat, who, it appears, is known here as Froggy, and his accomplice, Comte de Bordenave, who are wanted for high treason and for the cold-blooded murder of John Bradley, an officer of Bow Street, from whose custody they escaped two months ago.'

This address appeared to be partly given from memory and partly extemporised; and long before it was finished several of the company had rushed before the pair, and pinned them firmly by the arms, upsetting several glasses in the process.

The Frenchman showed his teeth like a wolf caught in a trap, and the Count turned ghastly pale, and looked as if fascinated at the officer as he spoke.

The latter rose to his feet, and laid his pistols on the table, adding solemnly as he displayed a sealed warrant to the company for a moment, and drew out a pair of handcuffs:

'Ay, poor John Bradley, as true a comrade

as ever drew the breath of life. May God have mercy upon his soul!—murdered while doing his duty. Many a ride he and I had together, and many a time have our barkers spoke out together as the honest lads [highwaymen] stood at bay in the moonlight; but this is the first time we have been put upon the track of a dirty foreigner. I hope it will be the last!'

'You pigs of Englishmen!' Froggy broke out as the darbies closed around his wrists with a snap. 'Napoleon will eat you up soon.'

'Not him, indeed!' growled Whitehead. 'You talk like a ha'penny book with no leaves in it. We've got a little one-armed man as'll warm his onions for him if he tries any pig-killing over here.'

'As for your Nelson,' said the Count in broken English and with withering contempt—'pooh! bah!' He spat out bitterly as he spoke.

'Now, gentlemen,' said the waiter cheerfully, 'there's no profit in holding arguments with dead men, and these are no better,' with a slight gesture of his thumb across the table. 'I shall need three good stout Parkgate lads to help me with them to Chester, where I shall be granted a proper escort to London; but before I start you shall drink the King's health in the best bowl of punch that our good host Johnson can brew.' He threw a couple of guineas on the table.

One of the fishermen opened the lattice window, and, taking up his glass, without a word swilled its contents out to the beach.

The remainder followed suit; and the officer, picking up the bowl, stepped briskly across the room and flung the liquor after the rest.

'Now, Mr Johnson,' he added briskly, turning to the landlord, who, with the waiters and guests from the other apartments, thronged the entrance to the taproom, 'wash this well out, and brew us a mixture that won't disgrace the King's health.'

At this juncture there was a sudden commotion among the group and exclamations of horror, in the midst of which the gigantic figure of Uncle staggered into the room. His beard was matted with blood and sea-sand, and a dark blot surrounded a large slash in the breast of his blue shirt. His face was ghastly pale, and as he reeled into the room and rested heavily against a settle he gasped out, 'A drink, mates; for the love of God, a drink! I'm dying!'

A glass of brandy was held to his lips, while a dozen voices asked who had been his assailants.

'Ask them varmin's,' he replied as the neat spirit darted new life through his veins. He pointed to the shrinking captives. 'Boys,' he continued, addressing the crowd, 'there's a big French schooner loaded down with arms for the Irish put in under Tinker's Dale, and I suspect they were only waiting for this murderin' pair before they went on their dirty errand to Ireland agen our lawful King—God bless him!—

for I seed madam theer a-bogin' at um with the lantern, though I did not think what it meant till she were beating it into my poor ould head! "Three flashes and a flash" it were, sure enough, Billy Whitehead,' he concluded, turning to that individual.

"Three flashes and a flash" were the last words of poor Jack Bradley,' ejaculated Shone. 'That the words meant mischief of some kind we knew, but what kind of mischief it was we could not make out.'

'Gentlemen,' said Whitehead, rising and sternly buttoning up his coat as he spoke, 'we are all friends here now—leastways all but two—and I can do no harm by stating that the secret order sent down here by Captain Monk was to keep a sharp lookout for "three flashes and a flash." No one seemed to know what it meant, and no doubt the same order has been sent to other ports. Uncle, here, and Jim Bushell were the only ones entrusted with the secret outside our own set, and they've been doing a sort of sentry-go up and down the river every night since. Now, just before I came in here Lieutenant Cottingham marched up to the "Red Lion" with over twenty red-coats bound for Dublin Castle with to-morrow morning's packet. What I have to propose is this, that we take these soldiers down the river in our boats at once, get around the schooner in the dark, and sarve it like we sarved the two passengers.'

A hearty cheer broke from the company. The Frenchmen cursed; but in a few moments the crowd moved out, the prisoners closely guarded, and the officers walking in the rear. The bandy-legged ostler and host Johnson alone remained.

'Well,' ejaculated the former, 'I always thought as them Bow Street runners were runners; but blow me if that old gentleman could run for toffee!'

'Thomas,' sagely rejoined mine host, 'Master Weasel isn't much of a runner like to speak on; but he dines off Master Hare oftener than thee or me.'

The whole population of Parkgate, including the strangers within their gates, remained on the quays during the night. In the early hours of morning the sounds of distant musketry, sometimes in the form of an irregular rattle, and occasionally in a solid volley, could be heard by the listeners grouped about the blazing fires. By-and-by it ceased, and a young sailor declared that he heard three faint cheers.

A few hours later, as the 'Royal Prince' coach climbed the steep summit of the Boathouse Hill, *en route* for Liverpool, the driver suddenly reined in his steeds and listened intently; then the 'outsides' turned an attentive ear westward, and transformed their left hands into the ear-trumpets used by primitive man. Five 'insides'—

three ladies and two gentlemen—stepped quickly upon the road and rapidly followed their example. Hearty cheers were continuously rolling from end to end of the Parkgate Parade; and in the brief intervals which intervened what seemed like a faint echo floated in from the westward.

The dawn began to break beyond the distant marshes, and in the faint light appeared a large schooner in tow of fully a score of small boats, rowed by dark figures with a sprinkling of red uniforms with white facings. Some half-dozen red-coats were drawn up on the deck of the schooner, with their lieutenant, who later on came out of Waterloo with a musket-ball in his foot and a captaincy; and several manacled figures lay on the deck near them. One or two more figures there were, who lay even more still, yet were not pinioned.

As the schooner drew near the quays the shouts of the conquerors and of those who awaited them seemed to blend in one mighty cheer.

The driver's whip-lash described an hieroglyphic over his head, and darted out with a sharp snap at the leaders. 'Well,' he exclaimed aloud, 'they have managed that all right; and the Parkgate lads will have more prize-money than they can spend for a bit!'

There has always been an Uncle Mealar at Parkgate, and, to all appearances, there always will be. The present Uncle, who related the above as I sat in the stern of his boat, watching his thirty-foot mussel-rake rising and falling in the vasty deep at Dawpool, assured me that when his grandfather 'coached it up to London' Mr William Shone informed him that he had brought him up to town not so much to give evidence in the treason case as to witness an execution at Tyburn in which the central figures were one Jean Colat and a certain French aristocrat known as Comte de Bordenave.

#### RELEASE.

WHEN we have closed the sad, world-tired eyes,

And clasped the hands above the pulseless breast,  
And stand in stricken silence crossed with sighs,

In the dim chamber of untroubled rest—

This is not Death, whose mystic lines invest

The white-robed form with strange and stately grace,

But the glad passing of our sometime guest  
To higher planes and realms of wider space.

It is not Death's chill fingers that endow  
With unaccustomed beauty the still face,

And crown with starry majesty the brow  
Late seamed with sorrows of our mortal race.

Not Death, but Life, that, parting, leaves the trace  
Of new-found glory on its prison-place.

P. F. SLATER.